

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PRETOR 04458 01 OF 03 292223Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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O 292142Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8635

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 PRETORIA 4458

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: PDEV RH UK US SF

SUBJ: RHODESIA: OWEN-YOUNG TALKS WITH SAG

REF: PRETORIA 4454

1. OWEN AND YOUNG, ACCOMPANIED BY THEIR RESPECTIVE TEAMS, MET THIS MORNING (AUG 29) WITH PRIME MINISTER VORSTER, FONMIN BOTHA, SECRETARY OF DFA BRAND FOURIE, SOUTH AFRICAN AMBASSADOR TO RHODESIA OLIVIER, DFA COUNSELOR NEAL VAN HEERDEN, AND HEAD OF DFA PRESS DEPARTMENT NEVILLE KRIGE. THE MEETING LASTED FROM 9:00 A.M. UNTIL 12:30 P.M., WHEN IT WAS ADJOURNED UNTIL 5:30. SUMMARY OF THIS SESSION WAS CONTAINED IN REFTEL.

2. BOTHA BEGAN THE SESSION BY SUMMARIZING HIS UNDER-
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STANDING OF THE SALIENT FEATURES OF THE PROPOSALS WHICH WERE PUT TO HIM IN LONDON, AND WHICH HE SAID HE HAD EXPLAINED TO IAN SMITH. RESPONDING, OWEN CLARIFIED SEVERAL POINTS, INCLUDING THE FACT THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS' UNDERSTANDING THAT BILL OF RIGHTS AND OTHER ENTRENCHED CLAUSES OF THE CONSTITUTION COULD NOT BE AMENDED FOR A MINIMUM OF EIGHT YEARS WAS INCORRECT;

THE AMENDING PROCEDURE PROVIDES THAT CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF THE CONSTITUTION COULD NOT BE AMENDED FOR WHAT WOULD AMOUNT TO ABOUT FIVE YEARS. AND RHODESIAN ARMY WOULD NOT, AS BOTHA HAD SAID, BE KEPT INTACT. WE HAD AGREED IN LONDON THAT CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF THE ARMY WOULD HAVE TO GO.

3. AS HE HAD DONE WITH THE FRONTLINE AND THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, OWEN FOCUSED ON THE LAW AND ORDER SITUATION AS THE BASIC PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED. HE STRESSED THAT RHODESIANS HAD TWO OPTIONS--AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION OR AN INTERNAL SOLUTION. IF THE LATTER WERE CHOSEN, THE WAR WOULD CONTINUE, PRESSURE WOULD BE PLACED ON OUR THREE GOVERNMENTS, AND SOUTHERN AFRICA WOULD BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED. AN AGREEMENT ON THE TRANSITION PERIOD WAS THE KEY TO AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION. THE RHODESIAN ARMY COULD NOT BE DISMANTLED, BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, A NEW ZIMBABWE ARMY HAD TO BE BASED ON THE LIBERATION FORCES. THE FRONTLIN PRESIDENTS HAD AGREED TO THE RETENTION OF SOME ELEMENTS OF THE RHODESIAN FORCES. IT WAS ABSOLUTELY IMPERATIVE IN THEIR EYES THAT THE ENTIRE STRUCTURE OF PRESENT ARMY NOT BE KEPT INTACT AND THAT THE NEW ARMY BE BASED ON THE LIBERATION FORCES. OTHERWISE, THERE COULD BE NO SETTLEMENT. OWEN WENT ON AT SOME LENGTH (FOR OVER AN HOUR) TO EXPLAIN HOW THE FOUR PARTIES

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WOULD NEGOTIATE THE DETAILS OF THE STATUS OF MILITARY FORCES DURING THE TRANSITION, THE ROLE OF THE UN, AND THE REACTION OF THE FRONTLINE AND THE PATRIOTIC FRONT TO THESE CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF A SETTLEMENT.

4. VORSTER THEN ASKED A SERIES OF QUESTIONS TO WHICH OWEN AND YOUNG RESPONDED. FIRST, HE WANTED TO KNOW THAT IF EITHER MUZOREWA OR SITHOLE WON THE ELECTION, WHAT GUARANTEE DID WE HAVE THAT NKOMO AND MUGABE WOULD ABIDE BY THE RESULTS. OWEN SAID THERE WAS NO ABSOLUTE GUARANTEE, BUT THAT A COMBINATION OF AN AGREED SETTLEMENT, UN INVOLVEMENT AND FRONTLINE BACKING--AND THE LATTER'S STRONG DESIRE FOR PEACE IN THE AREA--WOULD PLACE STRONG PRESSURE ON ALL TO ACCEPT THE ELECTION RESULTS. AMB YOUNG UNDERLINED THE NEED FOR AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION BY POINTING OUT THAT THE CONTINUANCE OF CHAOS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, AND THE POSSIBILITY OF TURMOIL SPREADING FROM THE HORN OF AFRICA A PEACEFUL RHODESIA ESSENTIAL TO THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STABILITY OF THE COUNTRIES IN BETWEEN. THUS AT THIS MOMENT, ALTHOUGH THERE CONTINUES TO BE DISAGREEMENT REGARDING A SOLUTION, THERE ARE MORE GROUNDS

FOR AGREEMENT THAN EVER BEFORE.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8636
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
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AMEMBASSY PARIS

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5. VORSTER STATED THAT WHAT OWEN AND YOUNG HAD SAID WAS ONLY AN ASSUMPTION. DID WE HAVE ASSURANCES FROM MUGABE AND NKOMO THAT THEY WOULD ACCEPT THE ELECTION RESULTS? OWEN RESPONDED THAT WE DID, AND YOUNG REPEATED THAT THE FRONTLINE HAD STATED THEIR FIRM BACKING FOR FREE ELECTIONS. VORSTER WAS STILL NOT SATISFIED ON THIS POINT AND ASKED WHETHER A NEW GOVT FORMED BY MAZOREWA OR SITHOLE WOULD BE UPHELD BY UK AND US. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT, IF THE RHODESIAN GOVT WENT INTO ELECTIONS, IT WOULD ACCEPT THE RESULTS, AND SOUTH AFRICA WOULD SEE THAT "THEY WOULD CARRY OUT THEIR COMMITMENT". HOWEVER, "THIS AGREEMENT IS LACKING ON THE OTHER SIDE". YOUNG AND OWEN MADE THE POINT THAT, ALTHOUGH NO GUARANTEE COULD BE GIVEN, WE COULD MAKE IT CLEAR TO THE NATIONALISTS THAT IF THEY RENEGED ON A DEMOCRATIC PROCESS, BENEFITS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CONFIDENTIAL

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EVEN BEYOND THOSE OF THE ZIMBABWE DEVELOPMENT FUND, WOULD NOT BE AVAILABLE TO THEM FROM THE WEST. NO BRITISH OR AMERICAN TROOPS WOULD BE PUT INTO THE AREA BUT, WITH AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION, WE WOULD BE MORALLY OBLIGATED TO DO ALL WE COULD TO SEE THAT IT WORKED.

6. VORSTER THEN ASKED WHETHER SANCTIONS WOULD BE LIFTED WITH THE INSTALLATION OF A RESIDENT COMMISSIONER, AND WHETHER THIS WOULD HAVE TO BE DONE BY A UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION. MCHENRY INFORMED HIM THAT SANCTIONS WOULD BE LIFTED, BUT THAT A SC RESOLUTION WOULD NOT BE NECESSARY. WITH ENOUGH CONSENSUS IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL, THERE WOULD BE ACCEPTANCE OF A STATEMENT BY THE UK THAT THE REBELLION WAS ENDED AND THE NEED FOR SANCTIONS NO LONGER EXISTED.

7. VORSTER AND BOTHA EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT "DIS-MANTLING OF THE RHODESIAN FORCES". WHAT DID WE MEAN WHEN WE SAID "ELEMENTS" OF THE RHODESIAN ARMY WOULD HAVE TO GO?" WHAT GUARANTEES COULD WE GIVE THAT THE ENTIRE ARMY "WON'T BE DISMISSED TOMORROW IN THE TRANSITION PERIOD?" OWEN SAID THE BEST GUARANTEE WE COULD GIVE WAS THAT NEITHER HE NOR THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER DESIGNATE WOULD ACCEPT A SITUATION WHICH THEY COULD NOT LIVE WITH. DETAILS OF WHAT ELEMENTS OF THE RHODESIAN ARMY WOULD BE RETAINED WOULD HAVE TO BE WORKED OUT IN THE NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE THE TRANSITION PERIOD. BOTH SIDES WOULD HAVE TO BELIEVE THERE WAS A BASIS FOR A CEASEFIRE AND, AGAIN, AGREEMENT BY BOTH SIDES HINGED ON RETENTION OF THE CORE OF THE RHODESIAN ARMY AND ACCEPTANCE THAT THE NEW ZIMBABWE NATIONAL ARMY WOULD BE BASED ON LIBERATION FORCES.

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8. VORSTER WANTED TO KNOW THAT THE ROLE OF THE UN FORCES WOULD BE. OWEN AND YOUNG SPELLED THIS OUT IN SOME DETAIL. FOLLOWING THIS, VORSTER POSED A SERIES OF QUESTIONS CONCERNING HOW WHITES' FEARS COULD BE RELIEVED REGARDING LAW AND ORDER DURING AND AFTER THE TRANSITION. HE EMPHASIZED THEY WOULD HAVE TO BE SATISFIED ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE RHODESIAN ARMY. OWEN REPLIED THAT HE HAD TO SATISFY NOT ONLY THE WHITE RHODESIANS BUT ALSO THE NATIONALISTS AND FRONTLINE. WE COULD NOT FULLY SATISFY THE WHITES ON THE LAW AND ORDER ISSUE BUT, AS HE HAD NOTED BEFORE, THE BRITISH GOVT WOULD NOT INSTALL A RESIDENT COMMISSIONER UNLESS THE

LAW AND ORDER QUESTION WAS SATISFACTORILY ANSWERED BEFORE THE TRANSITION. AS FOR THE RHODESIAN ARMY, IF TH UK AND US STATED PUBLICLY THAT WE WOULD NOT DISMANTLE THE RHODESIAN FORCE, THERE WOULD BE NO CHANCE OF AFRICAN ACCEPTANCE OF A SETTLEMENT. EQUALLY, A SETTLEMENT WOULD BE UNOBTAINABLE IF WE SAID WE WOULD DISMANTLE THE RHODESIAN FORCES. HE REMINDED VORSTER THAT THE AFRICANS HAD ACCEPTED THE PRESENCE OF ELEMENTS THE SMITH ARMY DURING THE TRANSITION--THAT THIS WOULD BE PART OF THE BASIS FOR FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS. HOWEVER, THE MORE WE DISCUSSED THIS IN PUBLIC, THE MORE DIFFICULT IT WOULD BE TO GET AGREEMENT.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8637

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE

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9. VORSTER ASKED ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE TRANSITION PERIOD, INCLUDING WHETHER MUZOREWA OR SITHOLE WOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE NEOGTIATIONS AMONG THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER, UN REP AND MILITARY COMMANDERS. THE RESPONSE WAS THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE, FOR THEY DO NOT HAVE ANY FORMED FORCES AT THEIR DISPOSAL. HOWEVER, THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER WOULD BE REPRESENTING THE INTERESTS OF ALL THE PEOPLE OF ZIMBABWE.

10. BOTHA EXPRESSED PARTICULAR CONCERN ABOUT THE FEASIBILITY OF TRAINING THE ZIMBABWE ARMY DURING THE TRANSITION. HE SAID HE WOULD NOT SEE HOW THIS COULD BE DONE DURING AN ELECTION CAMPAIGN, FOR THE VARIOUS CANDIDATES WOULD BE TRYING TO GAIN THE LOYALTY OF THE MILITARY. OWEN ADMITTED THAT THIS WOULD BE A PROBLEM, BUT NOTED THAT THE FORCES WOULD BE UNDER UN SUPERVISION
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AND THAT LAW AND ORDER WOULD BE MAINTAINED BY THE POLICE. MOREOVER, THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER WOULD USE HIS FULL AUTHORITY TO ENSURE THAT THERE WAS NO INTIMIDATION DURING THE ELECTORAL PROCESS. FURTHER, THE MODALITIES OF THE TRAINING WOULD BE SUBJECT TO NEGOTIATIONS BY THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER AND THE OTHERS.

11. VORSTER VOICED ADDITIONAL CONCERNS ABOUT THE STATUS OF BOTH THE RHODESIAN MILITARY ELEMENTS AND THE LIBERATION FORCES DURING THE TRANSITION. HE SAID IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN THIS TO SMITH, ESPECIALLY SINCE WE HAD ADDED A NEW PARAGRAPH (11E) THE THE PROPOSAL. OWEN MAINTAINED THAT IF AN AGREEMENT CENTERS ON WHETHER OR NOT THE RHODESIAN ARMED FORCES WILL BE DISMANTLED, WE WOULD GET NOWHERE. HE SAID HE HAD MADE IT CLEAR TO THE FRONTLINE AND PATRIOTIC FRONT THAT THE RHODESIAN FORCES WOULD NOT BE DISMANTLED. YOUNG POINTED OUT THAT THE PARTIES WE HAVE SEEN HAVE TALKED REASONABLY IN PRIVATE, OIT EACH HAS ITS PARTICULAR CONSITUENCY AND MUST SPEAK IN PUBLIC ACCORDINGLY. IT WAS FOR THAT REASON THAT, FOR EXAMPLE, NYERERE HAD MADE HIS STATEMENT THAT THE SMITH ARMY WOULD BE DISMANTLED. OWEN EMPHASIZED ONCE AGAIN THAT IF WE WERE TOO SPECIFIC PUBLICLY ON THIS ISSUE, THERE WOULD BE NO AGREEMENT.

12. NEAR THE CONCLUSION OF THE SESSION, YOUNG STATED THAT WE HAVE THE ELEMENTS OF A SETTLEMENT THAT COULD BRING PEACE TO A ZIMBABWE THAT WOULD RELATE TO THE WEST AND ALSO TO SOUTH AFRICA. THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE ONLY IF WE WORKED TOGETHER. IF WE CULD NOT, THE CONSEQUENCES WOULD BE GRIM. NO ONE HAD BEEN ASKED TO MAKE A MAJOR COMMITMENT. THE PATRIOTIC FRONT HAD BEEN ASKED ONLY TO DISCUSS TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE RESIDENT
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COMMISSIONER AND OTHERS. WE HAD ASKED THE FRONTLINE FOR THEIR GENERAL SUPPORT AND FOR THEIR BACKING IN THE UN.

AS WE NEEDED THEIR SUPPORT REGARDING THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, WE NEEDED SUPPORT FROM SOUTH AFRICA REGARDING THE RHODESIANS.

13. VORSTER RESPONDED THAT SOUTH AFRICA HAD ALWAYS STATED IT PREFERRED A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. HOWEVER, IT WAS THE JOB OF THE UK AND THE US TO SELL A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT TO THE RHODESIANS. WE WOULD HAVE TO CONVINCE THE RHODESIANS THAT THE ARMY WOULD NOT GIVE WAY TO A "TERRORIST FORCE". HE WAS UNSURE WHETHER WE COULD DISPELL THEIR DISTRUST OF OUR MOTIVES, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF THE ADDITION TO THE SECTION IN THE DOCUMENT DEALING WITH THE TRANSITION. AT THIS POINT, VORSTER ADJOURNED THE MEETING UNTIL 5:30 P.M.
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Message Attributes

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